



Made



Worship!

Day 3: Even in the Bad Times
1st-5th Grade

Even in the Bad Times

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

Each day, the students will learn a memory verse. Students who learn all 5 memory verses this week will receive a prize.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the students that we are able to and should worship the Lord even in the difficult times in life.

Key Verses

Acts 16:16-34—Main Teaching Passage
John 16:33

Memory Verse - Psalm 100:3

"Know that the Lord, he is God!
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture."

Hook

Review Psalm 100:1-2.

Tell the students to think about the best day they ever had. Have a few share. Ask if they praised the Lord for that day. Then tell them to think about the worst day they ever had. Did they feel like worshipping God on that day?

It's easy to worship God when things are going well. It's much more difficult when times are hard. Today, we're going to look at the story of two men who praised God in difficult circumstances and see that when life is hard, we can worship the Lord too.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

In Acts 16:16-24, things went from bad to worse for Paul and Silas. After a demon-possessed girl followed them around for days declaring what they were doing, Paul commanded the demon to come out of her. But when he did that, her owners got angry with him and Silas and brought them to the authorities. They were beaten and then locked in the innermost prison with their feet chained in the stocks.

But that night, in the midst of all their troubles, Paul and Silas did something truly remarkable. Verse 25 tells us that they prayed and sang songs to the Lord. They chose to worship God in the midst of their suffering! They could have complained about their situation or gotten upset with God, but instead they praised Him.

Then, that same night God sent an earthquake that shook the jail and broke all of the prisoners' chains. When the jail guard saw the prisoners' doors open, he thought they had escaped. He was so afraid of the trouble he would be in that he was about to take his own life, but Paul called to him and told him that none of the prisoners had left. The guard asked what he needed to do to be saved, and Paul told him to believe in Jesus. The guard then took Paul and Silas to his house, and his whole family believed in Jesus and was saved. The next day, the rulers of the city came and released Paul and Silas from jail. God had delivered them.

Teachers' note: While there are many great angles to this story, such as the jail guard's salvation, our main focus today is on Paul and Silas worshipping in the midst of difficult circumstances, and God delivering them. Please devote the majority of your lesson to this aspect.

LOOK

There are several similarities between yesterday's Bible story and today's. In both passages, God's people faced difficulties, and He delivered them. And in response, both the Israelites yesterday and Paul and Silas today worshipped the Lord in song. But there is a remarkable difference between the two events. While Moses and the Israelites worshipped the Lord *after* He rescued them, today we see Paul and Silas worshipping while they were still in trouble.

Worshipping God after He did something as great as parting the Red Sea probably felt easy, even natural, for the Israelites. In contrast, imagine how difficult it would have been for Paul and Silas to praise God while they were still in jail. It would have been tempting for them to get angry at God and blame Him for their circumstances. They could have complained about their situation and been filled with self-pity. But they didn't. Despite all the challenges they were facing, they still chose to praise God.

How were Paul and Silas able to worship in these circumstances? Actually, it was for the same two reasons we learned about yesterday:

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

because God is great and because He is good. They knew that they served a powerful God who loved them and was able to deliver them from any circumstance. They also remembered all the good things God had done for them in the past. He had rescued them from many difficulties before. And most importantly, God had forgiven them from their sins, and they were assured that, no matter what happened to them here on earth, they would spend eternity with Him in heaven.

What makes this story even more amazing is that Paul and Silas didn't know how things would turn out. They didn't know that God was going to set them free. They believed that He could, but they didn't wait until after He delivered them to worship. They praised Him in the midst of their suffering. That takes faith! It's important to note that they weren't praising Him for the suffering, but because He is good, even when times are difficult.

All of us go through difficulties in our lives. Think of some of the challenges you've faced in life, or maybe one you're currently facing. In those times, you have an important decision to make: will you choose to worship God? Will you believe that He is good and put your trust in Him, no matter what happens? Jesus never promised life would be easy. In fact, in John 16:33, He told His disciples that we will have troubles in this world... but then He said that He's overcome the world. He is with us in our trials, He will never fail us, and no matter what happens, we know that we will spend eternity with Him. So let's worship God, not just in the good times, but also in the bad.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize Psalm 100:1-3.

Take prayer requests and pray for anyone who might be going through difficulties in their lives. Encourage the class to worship the Lord always, no matter what we go through in life.

Pray: Thank the Lord that He is good, even when times are tough. Pray that He would help the whole class to worship the Lord always, even when they face difficulties.

Parent Question: Why can we worship God in difficult times?

A psalm or biblical song of worship that goes with today's study. This is the text of the passage, followed by a brief explanation of what this passage teaches us about worship. At the end is a question you can ask the class about what this song teaches us about worship.

Worship Then

Psalm 61

Hear my cry, O God,
listen to my prayer;
2 from the end of the earth I call to you
when my heart is faint.
Lead me to the rock
that is higher than I,
3 for you have been my refuge,
a strong tower against the enemy.
4 Let me dwell in your tent forever!
Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings! Selah
5 For you, O God, have heard my vows;
you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.
6 Prolong the life of the king;
may his years endure to all generations!
7 May he be enthroned forever before God;
appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!
8 So will I ever sing praises to your name,
as I perform my vows day after day.

From the first two verses of this psalm, we can tell that David must have written it in a time of great difficulty in His life. In his distress, he is crying out to the Lord, begging God to hear His prayer. Yet in the midst of his trial, David expresses a firm faith in the Lord. He remembers how God has been a refuge for him in the past (verse 3) and trusts that God will now protect him again (verse 4). In the end, David makes the choice to worship the Lord forever.

Question: Why is David able to trust God in difficult times, according to this psalm?

A song we sing in Children's Ministry that goes with today's study. This is the text of the song, followed by a brief explanation of what this song teaches us about worship. At the end is a question you can ask the class about why we sing this worship song.

Worship Now

Yes I Will

I count on one thing
The same God that never fails
Will not fail me now
You won't fail me now
In the waiting
The same God who's never late
Is working all things out
You're working all things out

Yes I will, lift You high in the lowest valley
Yes I will, bless Your name
Oh, yes I will, sing for joy when my heart is heavy
All my days, oh yes I will
For all my days, oh yes, I will

I choose to praise
To glorify, glorify
The Name of all names
That nothing can stand against

“Yes I Will” is about choosing to worship God, even when times are tough. The song mentions being “in the lowest valley,” which represents the trials we face in life, and singing “when my heart is heavy.” In those times, we need to make the choice to praise the Lord. We are able to trust in “the God who never fails,” and to whom “nothing can stand against,” and believe that He is “working all things out.” When you face difficulties, will you choose to worship the Lord? The answer this song gives is, yes I will!

Question: When times are tough, what should we choose to do and why, according to this song?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Acts 16:16-34 by David Guzik

3. ([Acts 16:16-17](#)) A demon-possessed slave girl follows Paul.

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”

a. **A certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination... brought her masters much profit:** This girl, though demon possessed, was a source of money for her owners as a fortune teller. Presumably this was because demons gave her supernatural insight into the lives of others.

i. “It actually says, ‘She had a spirit of Pythona.’ That does not mean much to most of us, which is why it is not translated literally. But ‘pythona’ was a certain kind of snake — a python. It is used here because the python was associated with the god Apollo...not far from Philippi, in this very area of Europe, there was a shrine to the Pythian Apollo.” (Boice)

ii. Today, much of what fortune-tellers and psychics do is only a money making sham. But when it is true and has a supernatural origin (as opposed to clever, insightful guessing), there is no doubt that it is inspired by demons. There are still those today who are **possessed with a spirit of divination**.

iii. Because demons are created beings, not “gods” themselves, we suppose that they cannot read minds, nor actually foretell the future. But they can read and predict human behavior, and can attempt to steer events towards a previously predicted conclusion.

b. **This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”** The demon-possessed slave girl preached for Paul, giving a demonic testimony to their divine credentials and their message. She didn’t do this only once, but for many days ([Acts 16:18](#)).

4. ([Acts 16:18](#)) Paul casts the demon out of the slave girl.

And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.

a. **But Paul, greatly annoyed:** Paul was **greatly annoyed**, and he did not appreciate the free advertising from the demon. He did not appreciate the source of the recommendation, and he didn’t need demonic approval of his work.

i. Paul knew that a man will be identified by both his friends and his enemies, and could do without a demonic letter of reference. In this, Paul was like Jesus, who often told demons to be silent, even when they told the truth about Him ([Matthew 8:28-34](#), [Mark 3:11-12](#)).

b. **I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her:** Jesus cast out demons with His own authority. Paul was careful to speak to demons only in the authority of Jesus Christ, and he spoke beyond the afflicted girl to the demon itself with this authority of Jesus.

c. **And he came out that very hour:** The idea behind **that very hour** is that the demon came out immediately. Yet Jesus said that some demons would be more difficult to cast out than others ([Matthew 17:21](#)).

i. Bruce translates the phrase, *It came out there and then*. He comments: “The words had scarcely left his lips

when she was released from its power.”

5. ([Acts 16:19-24](#)) Paul and Silas are arrested, beaten, and imprisoned for delivering the slave-girl from her demonic possession.

But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

a. **Her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone:** This explains why Paul and Silas were treated so badly. The masters of the demon possessed girl cared nothing for the girl herself, only for their ability to exploit her demonic possession for money. They were occult “pimps,” prostituting her spiritually.

b. **They seized Paul and Silas:** Paul and Silas were singled out not only because they were the leaders of the evangelistic group, but also by their appearance, as they were the most obviously Jewish. This is indicated by how they began their accusation: **“These men, being Jews.”**

i. Luke was a Gentile, and Timothy was only half Jewish. Paul and Silas *looked* Jewish, and “Anti-Jewish sentiment lay very near the surface in pagan antiquity.” (Bruce) The objection that these men were Jews is even more interesting knowing the Jewish community in Philippi was small.

c. **Exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.** Their charges were vague, simply accusing Paul and Silas of being troublemakers. But those vague charges were enough, because both the **multitude** and the **magistrates** were biased against Paul and Silas. They were biased because of their Jewish appearance, and because they assumed Paul and Silas were not Roman citizens.

i. In the Roman Empire there were two very different laws: one for citizens of the Roman Empire, and one for those who were not citizens. Roman citizens had specific, zealously guarded civil rights. Non-citizens had no civil rights, and were subject to the whims of both the **multitude** and the **magistrates**.

ii. Since they assumed Paul and Silas were not Roman citizens, they were offended that these obviously Jewish men harassed Roman citizens with their strange religion of a crucified Savior. As well, the **multitude** and the **magistrates** felt free to abuse Paul and Silas because they assumed they were not Roman citizens.

iii. “There was great indignation that Roman citizens should be molested by strolling peddlers of an outlandish religion. Such people had to be taught to know their proper place and not trouble their betters.” (Bruce)

d. **When they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison:** After being severely beaten, Paul and Silas were imprisoned in maximum-security conditions (**commanding the jailer to keep them securely... the inner prison... fastened their feet in the stocks**).

i. Jewish legal tradition gave a maximum number of blows that could be delivered when beating a person, but the Romans had no such limit. We simply know Paul and Silas were severely beaten. Paul later wrote of his life: *In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.* ([2 Corinthians 11:23](#))

ii. After such a bad beating, they were put in uncomfortable conditions (**fastened their feet in the stocks**). “These stocks had more than two holes for legs, which could thus be forced apart in a such a way as to cause the utmost discomfort and cramping pain.” (Bruce)

iii. Even in their pain, God was not far from Paul and Silas. Tertullian said, “The legs feel nothing in the stocks when the heart is in heaven.”

6. ([Acts 16:25](#)) Paul and Silas sing in prison.

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

a. **But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God:** Though they were arrested, beaten, and imprisoned for doing good, Paul and Silas were filled with joy, and sang praises to God. It seemed as if nothing would make them stop praising God.

i. Anyone can be happy in pleasant circumstances, but real joy comes only from within, and is a gift available to Christians at all times. “Instead of cursing men, they blessed God.” (Stott)

b. **And the prisoners were listening to them:** What a strange sound this was to the other **prisoners!** Prayers and praises unto God at midnight, in the midst of a brutal prison. Those prison walls had probably never heard such a sound.

7. ([Acts 16:26-29](#)) The great earthquake and its result.

Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.” Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

a. **Suddenly there was a great earthquake:** This earthquake was clearly supernatural. This was not only because of its timing and location, but also in the way that **all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.**

b. **The keeper of the prison...was about to kill himself:** The jailer did this for a good reason. Under Roman law and custom, guards who allowed their prisoners to escape received the penalty of their escaped prisoners. Knowing this, **Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.”** He assured the jailer that no one had escaped.

i. It would have been easy for Paul and Silas to escape thinking God provided another miraculous jailbreak. But to them, the lives of others were more important than their own personal freedom and comfort.

ii. In not escaping, they showed tremendous discernment. The *circumstances* said, “escape.” But love said, “Stay for the sake of this one soul.” They were not guided merely by circumstances, but by what love compelled.

c. **Ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas:** This hardened keeper of the prison **fell down trembling.** This was as dramatic as it sounds. This man was more affected by the love and grace demonstrated by Paul and Silas than by the earthquake. As well, this may have even been the same guard who beat them a few hours earlier.

8. ([Acts 16:30-32](#)) The conversion of the Philippian jailer.

And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

a. **Sirs, what must I do be saved?** The jailer was so impressed by Paul and Silas — by the love they showed to him, and from their ability to take joy even in misery — that he instantly wanted the kind of life that Paul and Silas have.

i. This is how God wants our lives to be: Natural magnets drawing people to Him. Our Christianity should make others want what we have with God.

b. **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved:** Paul’s answer to the keeper of the prison is a

classic statement of the essence of the gospel. This is salvation by grace alone, received by faith alone.

i. Some have worried that Paul's invitation to salvation here is *too* easy, and would promote a too-easy faith or a cheap grace. Others refuse to preach repentance, claiming that this text says that it is not necessary.

ii. Paul never specifically called the keeper of the prison to repent because *he was already repenting*. We see the humble repentance of the jailer in that he *fell down trembling*, in the full idea of the word **believe** (*pistis*, which means to trust in, rely on, and cling to), and in the command to believe on the **Lord** Jesus Christ).

iii. For the Philippian jailer, Paul did not direct him to counseling. He did not give him a lecture on theology. He did not discuss the spiritual terminology of the jailer. He did not talk about sacraments or even churches. He pointed this obviously repentant man to faith in Jesus Christ.

iv. There was an old chaplain general of the British Army — Bishop John Taylor Smith — who used a unique test on candidates for the chaplaincy. He asked them to say how they would speak to a man injured in battle, who had three minutes to live, how to be saved and come to peace with God. If they couldn't do it within three minutes, they weren't fit for the chaplain's service. Paul would be qualified.

c. **You and your household**: This seems to be a specific promise for that Philippian jailer. Under inspiration by the Holy Spirit, Paul told the keeper of the prison that his household would trust Jesus just as he did.

i. This was a promise made specifically to the keeper of the prison. But it is a promise that the Holy Spirit may well make alive to us, helping us to trust Him for the salvation of our families.

ii. However, the jailer's household was not saved merely because he was; Paul came and **spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house**. They were all saved because they all trusted the word of God and the Jesus revealed to us through the word.

9. ([Acts 16:33-34](#)) The Philippian jailer serves Paul and Silas.

And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

a. **And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes**: The same jailer who had punished them now cared for Paul and Silas, caring for their wounds and **he set food before them**. This shows how repentant he was and how he followed the example of love shown by Paul and Silas.

b. **And immediately he and all his family were baptized**: The jailer and his family saw no reason to delay baptism; they were baptized that very night, and all this began around midnight ([Acts 16:25](#)).

c. **And he rejoiced**: This man was carried from suicidal fear to abounding joy in just a few minutes. The Holy Spirit used the courageous praise of Paul and Silas in their terrible adversity.